



Engagement Safety



by Ir. Shum Keng Yan

Ir. Shum Keng Yan is a chemical engineer and a certified accident prevention and safety practitioner. He advises on EHS in the chemical, fast moving consumer goods, heavy metal manufacturing and building services industries across Asia Pacific and beyond. He regularly delivers talks at conferences, forums and universities.

In the series on Engagement Safety (March-July 2012), we looked at communication and influence on safety in the organisation.

Let us now look at the second series on Engagement Safety.

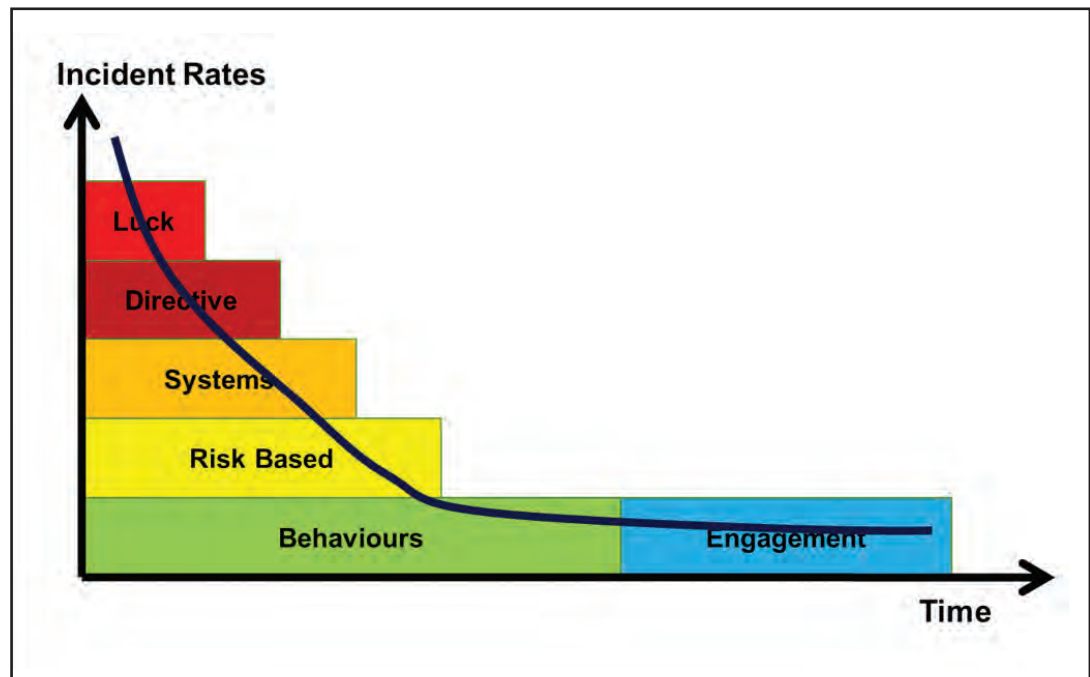
In almost all accident reports, these findings are common:

1. Employee did not follow procedure
2. Incorrect decision
3. Wrong priorities
4. Training not effective

5. Hazard not properly identified

At some point just before the accident, the key safety messages for the job did not connect. We usually attribute this to behaviour. However there is more to it than just behaviour. It is about being engaged on the job. It is an extension of behavioural safety. For a more detailed discussion, refer to The Ingenieur Vol 59.

If I am to put it graphically, this is how it looks like smoothed over time.



It is a lot about keeping safety in mind at work. The safety message also struggles against many other messages coming from quality, production, cost, etc. so much so that the share of mind is very quickly eroded.

We need to have a method to retain a share of mind that will highlight itself when it is required. We also need a way to move a person to embrace safety. Tough?

We will explore these in the coming months. Engage with me at: pub@iem.org.my.

Minds are like parachutes – they function well when open. Wishing you a safe and happy New Year! ■

The safest risk is the one that you did not take. Often it is the gap in the risk perception that leads to a gap in risk control.